

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
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June 1, 2006

Dr. Asaad Awan, Chair
Washington State Board of Pharmacy
Box 359885
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Dr. Awan:

I strongly oppose the draft pharmacist refusal rules recommended by the Washington State Board of Pharmacy today. The rules under consideration are unacceptable and fail to protect Washington families from pharmacists who refuse to dispense lawful prescriptions.

I have stated my position in two letters, dated January 18th and May 31st of this year, emphasizing that no one should be denied appropriate prescription drugs based on the personal, religious, or moral objection of individual pharmacists. Let me be clear: a lawful prescription should be filled unless there are clinical or patient safety issues. From a patient perspective, that is the bottom line.

The current rules under consideration are fraught with language that makes a pharmacist's responsibility unclear to both patients and pharmacists. They foster uncertainty and create an environment subject to challenges, leaving patients without the medications they need and were prescribed.

I expect the Board to develop rules that provide clear guidance and protection to the public. It is my hope that the Board will ultimately develop rules that put patients first.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris Gregoire".

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor

cc: Members of the Board of Pharmacy
Steven Saxe, Executive Director, Board of Pharmacy
Mary Selecky, Secretary, Department of Health
Christina Hulet, Office of the Governor